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WHAT ESOTERISM IS

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BY

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THE ORIENTAL ESOTERIC PUBLISHING CO.
1443 Q STREET NORTHWEST
WASHINGTON, D. C.

BF 1999
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THE CARNAHAN PRESS
WASHINGTON, D. C.

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WHAT ESOTERISM IS

Introductory

The question "What is Esoterism" is the first one on the lips of the inquirer, and it is asked so often and so persistently that we have determined to give in a few words some answers to the query; not a full or exhaustive explanation, for that is impossible—esoterism cannot be imparted by one to another—but enough to stimulate the latent life stirring within and to give it food for further growth.

There is in the mind of most people a very vague and undefined idea of esoterism as a secret teaching and therefore one to be avoided; they approach it with a sort of fear, due to the misrepresentations of those who are ignorant of it, and who are hostile to anything but their own belief.

Those, however, who are better informed, know that sacrifice and secrecy are invaluable aids to the development and growth of the soul; and all thoughtful men are interested to learn more of a teaching so

different from that of the world—whose very name suggests the Silence.

It is well known that Pythagoras required his followers to spend a term of years in silence and retirement; the history, indeed, of all great achievement is preceded by a going into the "wilderness" or "up into a high mountain apart."

We shall, then, set down in the following pages a few of the most evident truths about Esoterism; knowing that, though many will pass them carelessly by, yet they will be recognized by those whose hour has struck.

We do not aim at convincing anyone, we do but plant a few guide-posts to direct the footsteps of those who are seeking.

Truth needs no defence. It is, or it is not! If it is, it proves itself.

WHAT ESOTERISM IS

"For the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

The word Esoterism is derived from the Greek *Esoterikos* (within) and it embraces the inner as contrasted with the outer.

Esoterism declares the invisible to be more real than the visible, the life than the form, the soul than the body.

This is the principle that distinguishes esoterism, on the one hand, from the judgment of the intellectual man, on the other—the Christ-life from worldly belief. The life of the disciple of esoterism is marked by a living faith in the invisible, and a knowledge of the truth from experience. He does not believe, he *knows!*

There are many persons living esoteric lives in all the sects of the Christian Church, for the teachings of esoterism are one with those of the Lord Issa (Jesus); but the trend of dogma is outward into expediency

and reason, and unless it is counter-balanced by a very spiritual nature, true faith in the invisible becomes relegated to the realm of superstition; or, at best, is received as a tradition—of that which *was* but *is* no more.

For expediency is as far from faith as the East is from the West; expediency is of the earth, earthy; faith is from above.

The teachings of esoterism are based, not upon dogma, but upon principle; they embody the eternal laws of God that govern nature and the soul of man. They are not the exclusive property of any group of persons whatever, but are open to the investigation of all. The secrets of nature have always been revealed to those who could receive them; in all the ages of the world there have been wise men, philosophers, sages and initiates, who have attained to many powers now hidden from us. If these laws remain unknown to the mass of men today it is because humanity is not living up to the required level. As men advance in toleration, self-control, in purity, love and knowledge, as they become less sectarian and more universal, they also will

come to read in Nature's Book, and her secrets will unfold before them.

Sectarianism is unknown in Esoterism; the disciple being absolutely tolerant, and gladly giving freedom of thought and creed to all men.

Conception of God

Another of the questions most frequently put to us is asked in a low, somewhat doubtful voice: "But you do believe in God, do you not?" and it shows at once how far the ordinary idea of Esoterism wanders from the truth.

Esoterism not only believes in God, it *knows* Him; and there is a vast difference between belief and knowledge.

The teachings declare God to be the One Supreme Being, who gave forth from His own Essence the Universe and all that lives, so that all, absolutely all, is seen to be of God.

It is difficult to give in words any conception of God, the Absolute; for the All-Embracing, Omnipresent, and Eternal cannot be qualified or described. He who has neither "beginning of days nor end of

years," who is "Father of Light, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning," God "from everlasting to everlasting," cannot be conceived in His fullness by finite man; for the finite cannot conceive the Infinite.

But, since it is impossible for man to reach the height of this conception, God is revealed to him by the Great Teachers of humanity as a loving Father, all-wise and all-powerful, in whom love and justice are one. This ideal man can readily grasp, and it becomes to him a more or less personal Deity—God, the Absolute, clothed in human attributes—and to this Omnipotent, Omnipresent and Omniscient Fatherhood he offers worship.

Esoterism tells also of an endless chain of Beings, greater than man and more evolved, occupying all the steps of the great spiral of evolution between man and God, Who may be called the Fathers of our present humanity.

These Great Souls remain in touch with our earth in order to aid in its evolution; They are practically omnipotent so far as our world is concerned; and They are

known as the Elder Brethren, Masters of Wisdom and Compassion. These are truly one with God and with all Law, and the disciple reverences Them; and as he offers his life in the service of humanity, he also becomes one with Them and with the Divine Plan.

The Relation of Man to God

God manifests Himself to man as The Father; it is in this character that man must learn the true nature of God and his own relationship to Him.

For man is the son of God, partaking of His Essence. This Spark Divine is his inalienable birthright and can never be lost; the prodigal may wander, but he can always return to his Father's house.

The ultimate goal of man's evolution is indeed Divinity itself. Towards this prodigious height he climbs day after day, by working at his "Father's business;" for esoterism teaches that work is, at the present stage of man's evolution, the surest and safest path for man to follow in order to know God.

As the son aids the father in his work, he

comes to understand the plan of the work and is brought into a very vital touch with the inner nature of his father. He becomes one with him and with the work. He becomes It.

This is the Path to Divinity.

Man's Duty to His Fellow-man

From the stand-point of Esoterism, man is Spiritual Being—a living soul. The duty of one to another therefore is first spiritual, and afterwards material or outer.

"Sow a thought and you will reap an action;" if he thinks aright, his actions will take care of themselves.

Love is the first and most evident of duties; it might be said, indeed, to cover the whole field; for if any man could govern his every act and thought by love, there would be no need of further discourse.

Add to love, freedom and a large tolerance. The disciple allows other men (even those of his own family) to have their own thoughts and to act in their own way. He does not seek to know what they are thinking or doing, for this would impede their

freedom of action, and therefore limit their soul activities.

His love and service do not wax and wane according to the appreciation received; he looks for no gratitude or return of any kind, but, uninfluenced by the hostility or indifference of others, he continues his path, never forcing his love or knowledge upon any, but always ready to give to those who ask.

Esoterism claims that every man must fulfill strictly the duties of his position in life, and not seek to escape from them if such action would cause suffering to others; for an exemplary husband, mother or citizen is better than a selfish devotee.

Man's Duty to Himself

Man's duty to himself is to seek the light. If he is, as has been said, the son of the Great All-Father, it would seem as if the whole energies of his being should be bent upon keeping clear and open the channel of communication between himself and his Father.

The man who is true to himself exercises a rigorous control over his whole nature;

he restrains the lower desires and frees himself gradually from their demands, remembering always that his highest ideal should be to reflect the Divine Will and to become a fit instrument for the Master's use. He does not seek after worldly renown, wealth or position; adulation or blame are unheeded by him, for he is always in equilibrium.

With a mind one-pointed, he has a single aim—to know God, and to become one with Him. And to this end, he "deals justly," he "loves mercy" and he "walks humbly."

The Great Plan

There is, then, a plan; all is not confusion, injustice and suffering?

There is, indeed, a plan; but one so vast, so infinitely far-reaching that it is well-nigh invisible to the ordinary sight.

Picture, if you can, the Great Whole—ONE THAN WHICH THERE IS NO OTHER. This Great Being is alone, for He is all there is. When He out-breathes, He gives forth a Universe. This universe involves and evolves with its multitudes of interchanging and crossing activities; and when it has reached its greatest expan-

sion, it returns again by In-spiration to the One from whom it came forth; and, however manifold and contrary may have been the cross-purposes of the various beings who formed a part of any of the worlds engendered in this great out-pouring, yet all must be eventually stilled into slumber in the bosom of the One.

Man's Place in the Plan

From this One, it is a vast descent to man; but since the Universe is ONE, the same general principle and plan is true of the individual man as it is of the Grand Man, the Macrocosm.

Man's life, as a whole, is one great expression of those qualities that lie dormant within him—qualities that he has himself created and stored up in all his former lives. Thus he gives forth his little universe. This is expiration. Arrived at maturity, he begins to in-spire and draw back into himself all these activities he has perfected, and dies, so to speak, that he may be ready for another expression.

See how this cyclic activity is mirrored in Nature. In the acorn, life is still in-

visible, at rest; nor can any scientist say whether or no the seed will ever reproduce its kind. The acorn falls to the ground, and, if the great father-oak has informed it with his life, that invisible activity within the germ of the seed begins to stir. Feeding upon the body of the acorn, the root pushes down into the earth and shoots upwards into the air; it becomes a giant oak and for many long years it shows forth all those characteristics that were hidden and invisible in the germ. It carves upon its trunk the lines indicating Will, indomitable energy, resistance, courage and strength; the heavy, luxuriant foliage of each year shows the current of the life-force, and each leaf is marked with the tenderest individuality.

Here are multitudes of lives in one grand life!

Now comes the time of the greatest expansion; the oak has expressed all the activities and qualities that lay dormant within the germ. It begins to have seen its best days, it becomes smaller and weaker each year, physically, until at last it dies, as we say, or to speak more correctly, it

enters the invisible world to rest awhile and come forth again refreshed. It has drawn back into itself all those qualities and activities it had expressed; the oak is no more, save for the life lying invisible and forgotten in the germ within the acorn.

The process of dying, or inspiring—drawing back the activities into the individual—is not a momentary happening, as it is usually supposed, but is spread over a long period of time. From the moment of maturity we begin, like the acorn, to return, by inspiration, to the bosom of the Father, and to withdraw and perfect within ourselves those experiences and those qualities that we would express in our next earth-life. It is ever the same cycle. The coming forth of activities from the invisible, their manifestation in infinite variety, and their gradual return to the invisible when perfected.

The Breath manifests on all the planes of Being; it is spiritual, mental, astral, etheric and physical in succession as its vibrations gradually slow down; but the same law always holds good—Expiration and Inspiration, and then Expiration again—eternally.

If the primitive plan of progression continues to work in the same order as it has commenced—if all the kingdoms of nature continue to evolve and develop at the same time; then, when man shall have attained the summit of the universe, he will be followed by legions of beings mounting behind him towards the Supreme Splendor.

He can then look back upon the picture of his whole series of existences, and he will see no single link in the immense chain of evolution missing. He will see, as from the height of a tower, extended before him as far as the eye can reach, the infinite series of creations; he can number and recognize all the states through which he himself has passed—all the steps of the ladder where he has planted his foot—and upon all of these steps he will see beings, reproducing faithfully the image of what he himself was in the course of his successive lives.

He will then see in this living mirror a representation of his whole history; the nebula cooling and condensing—the terrestrial crust forming and thickening around the globe—the minerals depositing and becoming solid—vegetable life issuing from

the still-heated slime—then animals of all species—then man.

And, progress still continuing, he sees the kingdom of the superhuman appear—Wisdom, Love and Will come forth in bodies growing ever more glorious, powerful and full of beauty—until at last Divine Majesty is fully realized in the harmonious union of matter with spirit.

Humanity is at the point where spirit and matter may be consciously blended and the invisible brought forward into the visible; and so man is like a harpist who knows something of the laws of vibration and who plays upon his instrument drawing from its strings whatever symphony his genius dictates.

When plentitude has been attained, when the breath is all expired, (when the oak has arrived at maturity) begins the grand movement of the return to unity. The majestic procession of beings is gradually and rhythmically absorbed into the motionless Center of Life—as all the power and infinitely varied activities of the oak are stored up in the invisible germ of life in a single perfected acorn—and of all that had

been in Cosmos there remain only invisible germs, preserved beyond the limits of Time, Space or Number by Him who has realised the Supreme Perfection.

Each of these vast plans or schemes of evolution, is perfected in seven periods, called Manvantaras; and when we learn that one of these alone stretches into 306 million 720 thousand human years, we gain some idea of the grandeur of the Universe and of the greatness of God.

Origin

Esoterism or the Occult Science of the Orient does not emanate from the intelligence of ordinary men, but from the minds of extraordinary men; not that their mental and physical structure is other than that of mortals in general, but because their souls have developed powers that have hardly formed into buds in our own.

In the Orient, these Great Souls have made investigations almost exclusively into the mental and spiritual realms—the nature of God and of the soul of man—into the invisible, and into the subtler, etheric spheres of the earth's envelope.

Working in the Silence for many centuries, They have made discoveries and transmitted them to a little group of disciples; and these, starting from the data thus supplied, have in their turn made many more discoveries and transmitted them in the same manner, so that the body of Initiates today has attained to knowledge impossible of belief to ordinary scientists.

Scope

Esoterism gives the history of the past and the future of the earth and the other planets. It explains the evolution of life through mineral, vegetable, animal and human forms, cycle after cycle—for all life is cyclic. It tells of an etheric substance in which all the universe is bathed, the Breath, called the Akasa or the Astral Light, which is the reservoir of all present, past and future events. It gives a satisfactory explanation of the object and utility of the other planets and the nature of their inhabitants; of the geological cataclysms of the earth; it explains the existence of suffering and inequality; it provides a definite and intelligible scheme of manifestation in-

cluding both involution, or the descent of spirit into matter, and evolution or the ascent of spirit to God—a perfect cycle, a small arc of which has been recently partially *discovered* by Darwin and other scientific investigators.

Harmony of Science With Religion

Science has for several centuries past been at war with Religion; for having become entirely identified with materialism, and looking at revelation and the Sacred Books from its own stand-point—that is literally—it fails to understand their statements, and therefore sees errors of all kinds—chronological, geological, zoological—in the various narratives that seem to relate to the phenomena of nature.

Religion does not expect to be taken in a physically literal sense only, it speaks for the most part in symbol—this being often the only channel through which revelation can reach the spiritual intelligence of man. The ancient Initiates spoke in parable and veiled their knowledge so that it could be understood in a literal sense and also in six other inner and more vital senses.

Thus, every scripture is said by Esoterism to have seven keys.

The first twelve chapters of Genesis, for example, contain, when read with these keys, a complete cosmogony; and it is well understood that a "day" in the language of symbol signifies a day of creation or of Brahma, being a long period of years; that a night represents another long period, Pralaya, or the interval of rest between two such days. Thus, in accordance with the oriental method of teaching, the patriarchs may well have symbolized great universal forces, or again they may have stood for special epochs of time and thought. The right interpretation of scripture in its sevenfold sense has never been in the hands of the masses; but to the disciple of esoterism, it reveals, as he advances, far vistas of attainment; and in place of a contradiction between Religion and Science, he perceives a great harmony.

Formerly religion and science were one, and he who was the greatest scientist, who truly understood the laws of the Universe, was so because of his initiation into these mysteries. He had proven himself physic-

ally, morally, intellectually and spiritually great, and this union between religion and science that the Initiates realize within themselves, is again about to be consummated in the experience of the New Era upon which we are now entering.

Science has reached the height of her possibilities in the investigation of the invisible; such problems as the nature of life, for example, still elude her, and a thousand others just as vital. There can be no further progress, it is generally conceded, by means of finer mechanical apparatus, and all advanced thinkers are agreed that the subject must be approached from another side.

Esoterism supplies that other side, for it teaches that only the man who has developed within himself certain qualities is able to investigate, or to safely use, the subtler forces of nature. From now onward, research will not depend upon the ingenuity of delicate mechanical contrivances, for all of these will be superseded by human, vital force; and the scientist of tomorrow will act directly upon Nature. This great revolution is at hand and will unite

for all time religion with science by transmuting the scientist into the Mage.

Reincarnation

The law of Reincarnation is much misunderstood and often confused by inquirers with the "Transmigration of Souls" or some other of the many doctrines held in the Orient. Of all these, however, only Reincarnation is logical, continuous and satisfying to the intelligence as well as to the soul of man.

It teaches that, though the body perishes, yet the soul always is; that it always has been; that long aeons ago it came forth from the Great Source, a vital undulation, issuing from Nirvana. It takes on many forms, every separate form constituting a body; it is, in turn, mineral, vegetable and animal, and all this is preparatory to the final inflow of intellectual and spiritual man; this final step is yet but the beginning of a new series of reincarnations, experiences and rebirths, for man has to pass through all worlds, and to live in each world so long as is necessary for him to learn and to understand all about that world.

Truly, life, from the stand-point of Esoterism is a stupendous task, or a glorious achievement, from whichever side we look at it.

There is so much to learn about our earth, for example, that one short life is entirely insufficient for man to get even the first grasp of himself, or of his conditions. And so, having lived his three-score years and ten, he sleeps awhile in so-called death to the physical, whilst he lives the spiritual life on higher planes and returns to earth, having made good those few lessons he had learned and fixed them in the subconscious, so that they appear as tendencies in the next life. If, in a former life, he had the experience of poverty and if he learned its lessons in any degree, he will now come to the experience of riches, which is a far harder lesson than that of poverty. It is so difficult for a man to be rich and at the same time truly spiritual, that a Great Teacher has said that it is "impossible for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven."

And this series of differing experiences continues throughout many lives, the soul gaining continually in clearness of vision

and in understanding of the physical and lower realms, and coming into a greater power of expression in them; till, from being a helpless infant, as it was when it first began to incarnate, it passes through childhood, youth and manhood, and becomes the perfected soul, the Master, the Adept.

Karma

The law of Karma is also much misunderstood. It is held up as a hard and cruel taskmaster, and is blamed for all of the suffering that men endure; so that men fear and dread Karma, instead of courageously meeting the results of their own past actions.

The prevailing teaching of dogma declares that it is possible to do an evil action, and yet, through the intervention of some Superior Being, to escape the consequence of that action.

This teaching is entirely contrary to Esoterism, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" certainly seems much more logical and just; nor can we find anywhere in Nature any parallel to the generally accepted plan of salvation.

It is contrary to principle and to every known law that a cause should not produce its due effect; and the greater the soul, the less able is he to disobey law! It has been said that there is one thing that even God Himself could not do in His Universe, and that would be to break the law.

God is Justice. That God is also Mercy is shown in the numberless opportunities that are given to every soul for its perfection. Not one life, but many lives; not one trial and test but an infinite number of such delicately graded problems and difficulties are brought to him, that it is rendered an impossibility for any soul to refuse at last so gentle a suasion. Day after day, year after year, life after life, the same lessons are presented; and each time the conditions are varied somewhat, so that every part of the nature of the disciple is tempered and strengthened. Each decision that he makes sinks into the subconscious man and becomes gain or loss, according as he has decided for or against morality, truth and justice; and, though his life as a personality changes constantly, though he is sometimes man, sometimes woman—now rich, now

poor—yet those qualities that he has stored up as *character* are never lost, and each life shows a steady advance. After having been powerful and rich in one life, he may come to be very humble and poor in the next, and so the world might judge that he had retrograded; but the world should remember that it is said of the Lord Issa, "He had not where to lay his head."

The Will

Will is the first of Powers, therefore the cultivation and development of the Will are of first importance to the disciple. By means of the Will he is required to choose his path and to work for his own regeneration, by curbing the lower desires and bringing them into harmony with the Will Divine.

As a result of this discipline, the strength of the Will increases steadily and continuously, so that the disciple comes to have power over nature and natural forces, over his whole environment, as well as over other men.

This is a dangerous and critical point in his career, for it tests his nature to the

utmost. If he uses the powers acquired unselfishly, for the good of his fellows, his path will continue onwards and upwards; but if selfish desires creep in, he will fall into some phase of what is known as "Black Magic." There is today much dangerous teaching being given, innocently enough, along the lines of "success" and the attainment of wealth—or even health—which falls under this head. Fore-warned is fore-armed!

Hypnotism and Psychic Practices

From what has just been said it follows that the practice of hypnotism is both destructive and injurious to all concerned.

In medical practice it is unnecessary and undesirable—even though much good can apparently be effected temporarily by its use in certain cases—for magnetism, as it is employed in the schools in Paris, can replace it in every instance, without bringing the unfortunate attendant results; and there is no other use of hypnotism that need, for a moment be considered.

All negative psychic practices must be abjured by the disciple of esoterism, for

"Will is the first of Powers," and he who relinquishes his Will to the dominion of another whether visible or invisible, and allows himself to be controlled by that other, is giving up his own birthright, and, in weakening himself, is retarding the progress of the race.

Mediumistic control is harmful to all concerned, for, while the medium is speaking the words of another, his own God-given intelligence is lying fallow; his mental powers are circumscribed (for his control only allows him to move in a narrow field); while his emotional nature is subjected to great strain and he becomes irritable and oppressed.

A very subtle form of danger is encountered by those who are delving curiously into the secrets of Ceremonial Magic of one kind or another. These persons are growing more numerous every day as the literature on the subject is being sown broadcast, so that a word must be said in warning. Those who enter the astral realm, who evoke the presence of spirits by magical arts, are in danger, if they succeed, of "selling their souls to the devil"

as it was expressed in mediæval phraseology; for the powers invoked always exact a terrible penalty, and the danger is great.

Generation and Regeneration

The creative power in man may be used for the generation of physical offspring, which is its grossest manifestation; or for the generation of offspring on the higher planes of expression, such as is seen in any creative work, whether mental or spiritual; or again for the regeneration of the individual himself.

This power should never be used (or rather wasted) for self-gratification, but should be carefully conserved and transmuted on to the higher planes where *man ought to work*.

Though this is perhaps not the place to enter in detail upon this subject, yet there are two or three principles that should be pointed out, even here, so that the position of Esoterism may be clearly defined; and especially so that light may be thrown upon this vital and perplexing problem.

When two have chosen to live as one, there must be mutual co-operation and

mutual understanding for the uplifting of that One on to the higher planes.

Just how this shall be effected will be the individual problem for every couple to solve. But there must surely be a unity of ideal and of effort, and no compulsion or selfish desire.

When, as is so often the case, a barrier of the world's making (apparently) stands between those who would otherwise have sought each other, the disciple recognizes this bar as a sign-post of Karmic law, and turns aside from that path, however much he may suffer in so doing.

The most subtle and mischievous teaching, perhaps, among those which are being given on all sides, devises means to secure the gratification but to reject the consequences; and nothing could be more devoid of principle than this attempt.

We are not perfected beings, and the fact that we are still in some degree subject to sex-desire should keep us ever aspiring and at the same time ever humble. Let the disciple remember that desire is not the highest possibility, and let him aspire higher.

Esoterism puts all its teachings as definitely as possible to those who ask for them and who need them; but, as in all other questions, it leaves the disciple free to attain height after height along the difficult path of regeneration. There is no condemnation for him who falls; but a strong hand stretched out to help, with a word of brotherly counsel. An ideal is set up and all are invited to aspire towards it.

Esoterism and the Astral Plane

With regard to the astral plane, there is a great and radical difference between the teachings of Esoterism and those of other schools, especially those that are most eagerly sought after.

While the student of Esoterism is told of the existence of the astral world and the general laws obtaining in it, he is also taught that to enter that plane unprepared and before he has control of his own astral activities would be as foolhardy as it would be to trust himself to the raging ocean when he could not swim. He is therefore bidden to conserve his latent powers and to use them creatively; for he must become master

of his own astral body before he can enter this realm of illusion to any purpose. When he shall have learned by his own experience in his daily life to control his emotions, to purify his desires and to consciously direct his activities and his creative powers, then it may be safe for him to lower his rate of vibration and center his consciousness in the astral for purposes of investigation and usefulness.

Only as master can this plane be safely entered at any time, for it must always be entered from above, never from below. Almost all books dealing with this subject advise some practice by means of which men may climb up another way; but Esoterism teaches that true knowledge can be gained in no other way than by the greatest purity of life and thought.

To enter the astral plane from below, through the physical, is fraught with danger; whether entrance be sought by concentration upon some physical object, by the use of Ceremonial Magic, or by breathing and other psychic exercises undertaken with a view to rousing the Kundalini; for all of these, as well as mediumistic practices, are

destructive to the Will of the Real Man, and tend to dissipate his powers.

Curiosity is rampant in the world today, and it is slaying its thousands and its tens of thousands!

Esoterism Contrasted With Other Schools of Oriental Thought

While we have the broadest tolerance for the points of view of other men, yet Esoterism has a very definite and practical teaching of its own.

To inquirers the differences between the various schools and our own are difficult to perceive, so that we are constantly asked to draw some clear lines of demarcation between them. This we are always loath to do, because Esoterism, being synthetic, looks rather at the points of agreement than at differences. It glories in the harmonies that exist in all religions and it sets aside, as of secondary importance, those divergences that arise out of the multiplicity of creation.

Still it seems desirable to use these last pages to show, in a general way, what Esoterism stands for, by throwing some of its

teachings and methods of development into contrast with those of other schools. We do not do this in any sectarian spirit or with the intention of disparaging the ideas of others, for all aspects of truth are valuable. According to our teachings, however, certain points are, at the present stage of evolution, of *primary* importance, while others should be allowed to take a *secondary* place.

The esoteric teachings are very strong on the religious, moral and ethical sides; for man must, first of all and above all things, *live* to the highest he knows; only so can he learn more.

This distinguishes Esoterism as belonging to the "Heart" doctrine and not to that of the "Eye" or of head-learning. It is very important, truly, for man to be intellectually well-equipped; yet we are told, "The brain that reasons the most wisely knows less of the Eternal Science than the heart that loves. Love may exist without form; but no form can exist without love!"

Esoterism is primarily *subjective* and not objective in its methods. It regards every subject from within; it studies the grand Principles and Laws of Life rather

than their manifestations, Causes before effects, Life before body. Seeing every subject, first of all and principally, as a *whole* it spends comparatively little time on outer details. Its tendency is always to the center and towards Oneness. It declares that the reading of books, talking and the attending of lectures should be indulged in sparingly after the first foundation has been laid; for all these are scattering to the force of the growing soul—the "real" man. Strength and enlightenment come from within, not from without. The omnivorous reader is never a creator; and though books are a valuable adjunct to development, yet they must stand second, and not first. The intellectual is not the "real."

Though "to know God" may be said to be the end and aim of human endeavor, yet this height is not to be attained at a single bound. Rather is the upward path seen to be a series of graduated steps, like those of a ladder, built by the disciple himself, as he ascends from earth to heaven. There is, in the life of the disciple of Esoterism, no special state of God-Consciousness, to which he may attain, once for all in ecstasy, and

be forever blessed! There are, indeed, wonderful moments of spiritual upliftment, blissful halting-places and oases in the desert of earth-life; but these are not regarded as ends in themselves, nor are they to be looked at in the separated sense of personal achievement. Rather are they gifts from above, rifts in the clouds through which the glory shines and quickens the life of the aspiring soul. Only the weak and perishing will elect to remain in the oasis; the strong will but use its cool and refreshing memory to speed them on their journey back into the world of action.

Nor will the true disciple think that this "vision glorious" has freed him for all time from sin, or given him henceforth the right to live as he will; rather does it raise his ideals and purify his standards, so that, now, he obeys the laws of life voluntarily and not because of conventional observance.

The following table will make our meaning clearer. In the first column are those central ideals round which all our teachings are grouped. We value these things *first,* but without neglecting some other views shown secondarily.

ESOTERISM VALUES

PRIMARILY	SECONDARILY
Synthetic teachings	Analytical teachings
Subjective teachings	Objective teachings
Spiritual teachings	Intellectual teachings
Study of the Whole	Study in detail and parts
Harmony and Oneness	Discussion of differences
Silence	Speech
Concentration of force	Diffusion
Creative constructive work	Reading and Repeating ideas of others
Development of Will	Yoga Practices
Faith	Belief
Humility	"Affirmations"
Willingness to suffer	Mental Suggestions

ESOTERISM AVOIDS

Dogmatism

The Visionary

Emotionalism

Sectarianism

Intolerance and persecution

Criticism and gossip

Scattering of force

Destruction of work of others

Negative Psychic practices

Doubt and scepticism

Combativeness and Self-righteousness

Self-pity, Complaints, Rebellion

ESOTERISM VALUES		ESOTERISM AVOIDS
PRIMARILY	SECONDARILY	
Positive action in formation of character	Treatments for success	Self-seeking, black magic
Non-Resistance	Resignation	Self-defence

IDEALS OF ESOTERISM		ESOTERISM AVOIDS
PRIMARILY	SECONDARILY	
Watchword is "Service	God-Consciousness, Knowledge, Hero-Worship, Emotional Experience	Indolent sensuality and visionary schemes
Method is "Work for Others"	Work for spiritual attainment	Sloth, inertia
	Study and Self-Culture	Self complacency
Ideal is "Freedom"	Liberty	Extremes
In sleep, rise at once to the Spiritual plane	Seek attainment of some special aim during sleep	Psychic experiences or trying to go out on the Astral Plane

In the first column of the foregoing table we find those ideals which the disciple strives to live, first of all. Contrasted with these, in the second column are other ideals, good in themselves often and necessary to the childhood of the soul, but secondary to the grown man; while in the third column we find pitfalls to be avoided.

We have spoken plainly, for this is the day when, if ever, plain speaking is needed for the salvation of the race. A New Era is with us and those who fall into line with the Grand Army will be led onwards and upwards, while those who fall out of the ranks must wait long for another opportunity.

A teacher, instructions and books are not the first essentials, though they are all most useful. The "one thing needful" is now, as it always has been, the devotion of the heart to high ideals, strength to live these in spite of every obstacle, and loving service.

HE WHO FEELS HIS HEART BEAT PEACEFULLY,
HE SHALL HAVE PEACE.

FIRST PRINCIPLES OF ESOTERISM

(Published under the auspices of the Order of the Initiates of Thibet)

The object of this work is to "present in an orderly sequence the 'First Principles' upon which a balanced and symmetrical knowledge of Occultism rests, and to point out the essential connection between this and a pure, true life."

It is addressed primarily to " those who have familiarized themselves with the ordinary Oriental teachings," and is designed to guide the disciple to the first of the Seven Portals that lead into the "superhuman" or Divine World; as well as to provide him with the keys necessary to open the gate.

The book is, however, for the most part easily appreciated by those who have little or no acquaintance with the subject; all technicalities or foreign terms (whenever of necessity introduced) are explained in the text the first time they occur.

Table of Contents: COLORED FRONTISPIECE, The Three Worlds. CHAPTER I. Exoterism and Esoterism —II. God, Man and the Universe—III. The Constitution of Man—IV. The Plastic Mediator and the Odic Fluid—V. Man's Place in the Universal Scheme—VI. Involution and Evolution—VII. Reincarnation and Immortality—VIII. The Law of Karma—IX. Methods of Instruction in the Order.

PURPOSE

1. To form a chain of universal Brotherhood, based upon the purest altruism, without distinction of creed, caste, sex or color, in which reign tolerance, order, discipline, liberty, compassion and love.

2. To study the Occult Sciences of the Orient, and to seek by meditation, concentration and by a special line of conduct, to develop those powers that are in man and his environment.

3. To provide a practical philosophy of life which shall aid men in meeting the problems and enduring the trials of the world with fortitude.

4. To give Lectures and Courses of Study for the members and for inquirers.

ADVANTAGES OF MEMBERSHIP

1. Affiliation with the Universal Brotherhood, and union, more or less vital according to the development of each one, with Those Who are directing the Great Work of human progress.

2. The privilege of sharing in a united and systematic movement to further this great work;

of aiding it by individual effort and influence, or by contributing financially; and the opportunity of personal association with its leaders.

3. The receipt of such lessons as accord with the degree of membership.

4. Admission to the meetings of the Society for study (see under "Classes of Membership").

CLASSES OF MEMBERSHIP

There are three classes of membership: Active, Corresponding and Honorary.

Active Members are those who are desirous of giving active aid to the work, and who are sufficiently advanced to receive this degree. They are required to pass an initiatory examination, and they receive personal instruction if desired.

Corresponding members are those who are in close connection with the Trustees of the Society, working with it for the diffusion of the oriental esoteric doctrines, and they receive those lessons to which their grade entitles them. They can attend the weekly meetings as guests.

Honorary Members are those who, having served the Society, or the world, actively by special work, or in some other way, are nominated as such by the Trustees, in recognition of their efforts. They can attend the weekly meetings of the Society by invitation.

BULLETIN

The Society issues a weekly Bulletin in order to give out the teachings and also to keep the different parts of the work in touch with each other. The Bulletin contains a helpful editorial and a poem as well as information with regard to books and literature, and it is a means of communication with members and correspondents all over the world. Subscription 50 cents a year.

LIBRARY

The Oriental Esoteric Library, which is affiliated with the Society, sells, and loans by mail most of the standard works relating to Oriental Philosophy and Ethics, Occultism, Theosophy, Psychical Research, New Thought and kindred subjects; many of these books are loaned without charge. The Free Mailing Section is especially intended for inquirers. Address Librarian, O. E. L.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S SECTION

The Young People's Section is especially designed for those between the ages of fifteen and twenty-one, although no age-limit is fixed. Its aims and teachings are the same as those of the Society. Address its President, Mr. Carleton W. Washburne, 600 Villa St., Elgin, Ill.

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